

**Massachusetts Water Resources Commission
Meeting Minutes for February 11, 1999**

Commission Members in Attendance:

Mark P. Smith	Designee, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Marilyn Contreas	Designee, Department of Housing and Community Development
Peter Webber	Commissioner, Department of Environmental Management
Richard Thibedeau	Designee, Department of Environmental Management
Arleen O'Donnell	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection
Karen Pelto	Designee, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement
Joe McGinn	Metropolitan District Commission
Joe Pelczarski	Coastal Zone Management
Bob Zimmerman	Public Member
David Rich	Public Member
Frank Veale	Public Member

Others in Attendance:

Michele Drury	DEM
Duane LeVangie	DEP
Nina Danforth	DEM/OWR
Ron Massey	Town of Franklin
Chris Kilbridge	Anderson-Nichols
Jack Henderson	Camp Dresser & McKee
Andy Miller	Camp Dresser & McKee
Charles Aspinwall	Town of Millis
Lou Wagner	Mass Audubon Society
Stephanie Lovejoy	DEM/OWR
Nicole Napoleon	DEM
Lorraine Downey	MWRA
Steven Lipton	DEP
Vicki Gartland	DEM
James Miller	Town of Stoughton
Philip Farmington	Town of Stoughton
Nancy Ethel	MWRA

Agenda Item #1: Executive Director's Report:

- **Update on Interbasin Performance Standards:** The draft standards will be given to the Commission to obtain a general sense of approval. A public hearing will follow, and then the revised draft including public comments will be brought back to the Commission for approval at the following WRC meeting.
- **Interbasin Transfer Application Update:** Smith referred the Commission to the package handed out, which includes the update.

- **Army Corps of Engineers Proposals:** Early in the fiscal year, the Commission receives proposals from groups seeking to receive planning assistance from the Army Corps programs. The SuAsCo Watershed Team developed a program to perform a TMDL for the Assabet River, which has a eutrophication problem. They are requesting that the WRC approve the proposal so they can receive the assistance from the program. The proposal has been approved by other agencies.

A motion was made by Zimmerman and seconded by O'Donnell to:

APPROVE THE ADDITION OF SECTION 22 PROJECT FOR SUASCO

motion past unanimously

Agenda Item #2: Vote: Water needs forecast for Millis

Drury summed up the situation in Millis based on a memo given to the WRC in February of 1999. Their compliance with the water conservation standards is good, but not quite where they should be. Water will most likely be sold to Franklin until the year 2020. According to the draft pumping scheme, the new well will cut back the amount of pumping on other town wells and ponds during times of stress. DEP is working with Millis to research and plan for implementation of conservation measures. The water sale to Franklin by Millis will increase the water permitted to Millis but not to Franklin. There will also be isolated impacts on wetlands due to construction but no broad impacts are anticipated. DEP staff noted that Franklin and Millis will require a Water Act Management permit.

A motion was made by Zimmerman and seconded by Corte-Real to:

APPROVE MILLIS'S WATER NEEDS FORECAST AS PROPOSED

The motion was unanimously approved

Agenda Item #3: Approval of schedule for review and decision on WRC conditions for the Canton Interbasin Transfer

Smith presented the conditions of the interbasin transfer as follows:

- 1) Examine septic systems in unsewered parts of town
- 2) Present a report on the plan for the reduction of I/I
- 3) Present a management plan of the operation of the well
- 4) Report alternative sewerage disposal systems for parts of the town that is unsewered

All the proposals for these conditions were submitted to the Commission by their deadlines. Staff have reviewed the asked for additional information on all of the proposals. The staff will be coming before the Commission to recommend if the conditions will be met by Canton's proposals. Smith reminded the Commission that part of the settlement with the CLF and NepRWA is to allow enough time for public comment on the proposals. The Commission will come to an agreement with the

town on whether or not the proposed sets of options fulfill the conditions and protect the Neponset River. At the next WRC meeting, staff will put forth its recommendation.

Agenda Item # 4: Update: Stoughton's Cedar Swamp well field interbasin transfer: requests for additional information

Drury referred to a memo from staff to the WRC of February 11, 1999, in which DEM requests additional information to review the proposal under the Interbasin Transfer Act. Revisions of some of the tables and a more detailed report on the anticipated changes produced by using the well are needed.

There is a discrepancy between the Water Management Act application and the Interbasin Transfer Application. In addition, clarification was asked on the question of whether Whitman Brook is an intermittent stream. It is listed as perennial by the USGS and under the terms of the River Protection Act. The Rivers Protection Act has a formal process to change the classification, but this determination will not affect the Interbasin Transfer application.

The wellfield's capacity is 0.59 mgd. The question was raised as to whether there is a need for a full application rather than a request for a determination of insignificance. The Queset Brook subbasin is considered "stressed" in that it does not provide enough water in a time of drought, but they have a sufficient amount of water in a normal period. O'Donnell asked if there were other alternatives. The town engineer replied they have explored for water in the last 20 years, and the Cedar swamp was the last place where there is a viable water supply source. Zimmerman inquired if the extent of the aquifer was known and if it crosses watershed lines. Drury responded that it does not cross the Taunton River Basin, however, the zone II extends into the Hockomock subbasin of the Taunton River basin.

The Commission inquired if the proposed well will fulfill all the town's water needs. The town responded that the well development will provide a critical step to relieve water shortages, and it may or may not meet requirements of the 2020 year projections. The Commission inquired if Stoughton has looked into MWRA for water. The town had, but that it was expensive.

Zimmerman expressed concern about drilling bedrock wells, particularly because there is a lack of understanding as to where the water is coming from.

Agenda Item #5: Update on the Braintree and Weymouth Interceptor by MWRA

Drury summarized the current situation with assistance from Ettele of the MWRA. The MWRA is applying for an increase in the capacity of the Braintree-Weymouth interceptor. The increase in capacity will not increase the amount of waste water transferred. It is designed to relieve sewer overflows to local brooks during a one-year, six-hour storm. The application has been reviewed by DEM, DEP, and DFWELE and staff recommends that the application be deemed complete. Additional information on the effects of the salt water wedge in Smelt Brook was requested DMF and was received. Other additional information, not critical to IBT review, was requested by DEP and will be provided by February 26, 1999.

DEM legal staff reviewed the application for WRC for several jurisdictional issues. The first issue whether the WRC has the authority to instruct the MWRA to address the sewage overflow in Weymouth. Kate Lewis, Chief of Legal Services for DEM, stated that the Commission does not have this authority, as the problem occurs with town-owned infrastructure and is not part of the MWRA system. The second issue concerned the time frame for the MWRA to construct the project. The Administrative Consent Order requires the MWRA to go out to bid on the project by January 1999 and to have all work completed by December 31, 2004.

Ettele pointed out that the overflow within the communities are due to deficiencies in the community-owned system. O'Donnell questioned whether the large costs could be avoided by reducing I/I. Ettele responded that even with I/I removal, a new relief sewer would be needed.

The issue of the impacts on all surrounding tributaries and local habitats was raised. The MWRA and state agencies are involved to make sure conservation concerns are considered. MWRA emphasized that the use of the new pump will be to lift sewage not to pull more water. O'Donnell requested the additional information for the impacts on Smelt Brook.

A motion was proposed by Smith and seconded by McGinn:

TO ACCEPT THE BRAINTREE AND WEYMOUTH INTERBASIN TRANSFER
APPLICATION AS COMPLETE

The motion was accepted unanimously

Smith requested to have a copy of the additional information requested by DEP placed at the local library, along with DEM's basin plan that included a hydrological analysis of the area.

Agenda Item #6: Vote: 1999 WRC Work Plan

The new secretary has reviewed and agreed with the focus of work plan and has accepted it.

A motion was made by Zimmerman and second by Corte-Real to:

ACCEPT THE 1999 WRC WORK PLAN

The motion was accepted unanimously

O'Donnell noted that on number 3 under objectives, that the WMA may not be the appropriate enforcement vehicle for everything under the Interbasin Transfer Act. There are some places where the WRC should not rely on DEP.

Agenda Item #5: Definition of a Stressed River Basin

Gartland suggested that a starting point on defining stress would be to look at basin during moderate droughts. Basins whose water levels were low during moderate droughts should be considered stressed. There is an issue on how exactly to assess this and suggestions were requested.

O'Donnell suggested not to look at minimum stream flow number. She suggested looking at USGS historical gage data to determine trends over time and establish a sliding scale. This could indicate how much loss has been suffered in certain areas.

The issue was also raised that flooding can be indicative of stress, so low flow would not be the only issue applicable here.

The suggestion was made to look at other states for information. Smith pointed out there is a lot of information out there, but it is usually site specific. Smith further noted that how the stressed basins definition, when one is decided upon, will be used needs to be considered. Also a solid process will be needed to follow in the assessment process.

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**SL/MG**

Minutes approved 6/10/99